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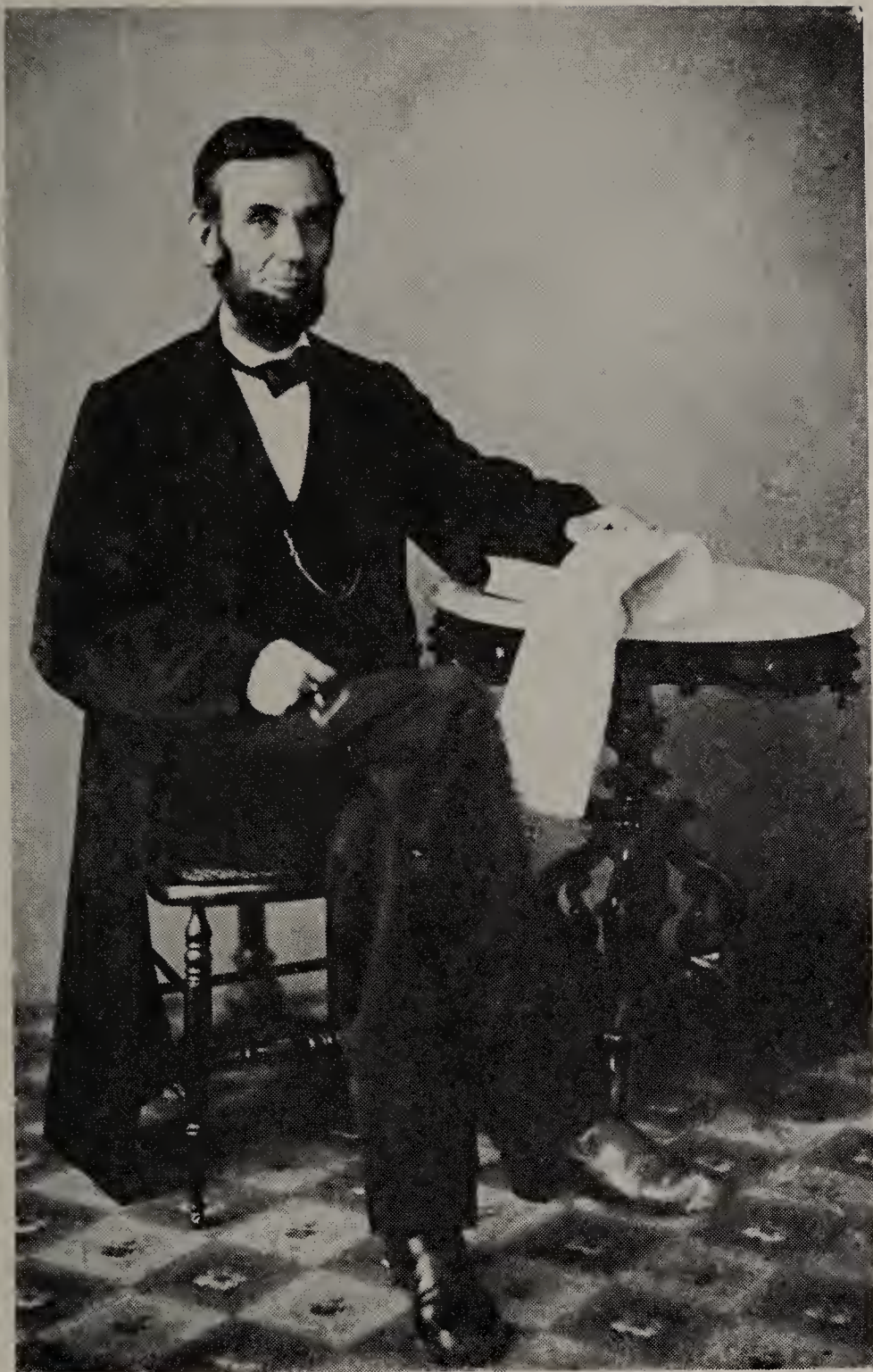


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GENEALOGY
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Abraham Lincoln, August 9, 1863.
Photograph by Alexander Gardner

Illinois' Lincoln Letters

By CLYDE C. WALTON
Illinois State Historian

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois
OTTO KERNER, *Governor*

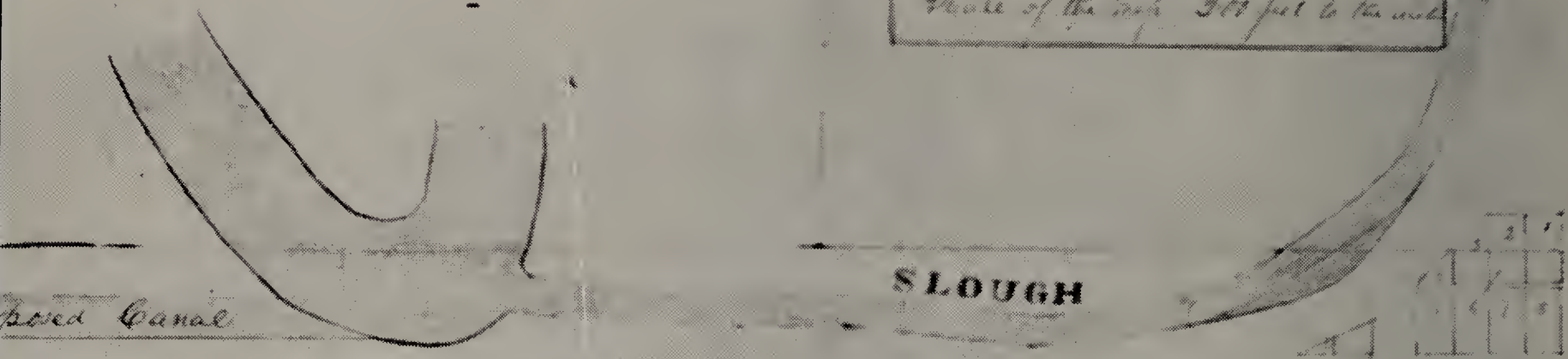
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Allen County Public Library
 900 Webster Street
 PO Box 2270
 Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

of the ...
 correct map of the town of Huron; and
 that the ...
 complies with.

Wm. Lincoln
 Jan. 21. 1836.
 as Thomas H. ...
 surveyor of the ...
 in ...

Explanation
 Width of Streets 70 feet
 do. " Alleys 16 "
 Length of Lots 112 "
 Front " 60 "
 Commenced at the S.W. corner of the
 Public Square
 Scale of the map 300 feet to the inch



7 3 2 1 5 8, 8	7 3 2 1 5 7, 8	7 3 2 1 5 6, 8	7 3 2 1 5 5, 8	7 3 2 1 5 4, 8	7 3 2 1 5 3, 8	7 3 2 1 5 2, 8	7 3 2 1 5 1, 8
7 3 2 1 5 9, 8	7 3 2 1 5 10, 8	7 3 2 1 5 11, 8	7 3 2 1 5 12, 8	7 3 2 1 5 13, 8	7 3 2 1 5 14, 8	7 3 2 1 5 15, 8	7 3 2 1 5 16, 8
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7 3 2 1 5 25, 8	7 3 2 1 5 26, 8	7 3 2 1 5 27, 8	7 3 2 1 5 28, 8	7 3 2 1 5 29, 8	7 3 2 1 5 30, 8	7 3 2 1 5 31, 8	7 3 2 1 5 32, 8
7 3 2 1 5 33, 8	7 3 2 1 5 34, 8	7 3 2 1 5 35, 8	7 3 2 1 5 36, 8	7 3 2 1 5 37, 8	7 3 2 1 5 38, 8	7 3 2 1 5 39, 8	7 3 2 1 5 40, 8
7 3 2 1 5 41, 8	7 3 2 1 5 42, 8	7 3 2 1 5 43, 8	7 3 2 1 5 44, 8	7 3 2 1 5 45, 8	7 3 2 1 5 46, 8	7 3 2 1 5 47, 8	7 3 2 1 5 48, 8
7 3 2 1 5 49, 8	7 3 2 1 5 50, 8	7 3 2 1 5 51, 8	7 3 2 1 5 52, 8	7 3 2 1 5 53, 8	7 3 2 1 5 54, 8	7 3 2 1 5 55, 8	7 3 2 1 5 56, 8
7 3 2 1 5 57, 8	7 3 2 1 5 58, 8	7 3 2 1 5 59, 8	7 3 2 1 5 60, 8	7 3 2 1 5 61, 8	7 3 2 1 5 62, 8	7 3 2 1 5 63, 8	7 3 2 1 5 64, 8

MAP OF HURON.

ILLINOIS' LINCOLN LETTERS

By Clyde C. Walton

Illinois State Historian

The people of Illinois, through their state government, own one of the three largest existing collections of letters and documents in the handwriting of Abraham Lincoln. These valuable papers are carefully preserved in the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, where they are available to writers and students. Exhibits of the letters and other Lincoln memorabilia may be seen in the Henry Horner-Lincoln Room of the Library.

THE ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY for many years has been a veritable treasure house of original source material concerning Abraham Lincoln. This material takes many forms: contemporary newspapers (there are now 20,000 reels of microfilm of Illinois newspapers in the Library), prints, drawings, photographs, rare pamphlets, and, most significantly, original manuscripts. The original manuscripts fall into three general categories: contemporary letters and documents written *by* Lincoln, those written *to* Lincoln, and those written *about* Lincoln.

There are now 1,247 original letters and documents written by Lincoln in the Illinois State Historical Library, ranging in importance from one-line notes or endorsements to one of the five manuscripts of the Gettysburg Address. The earliest is dated March [11], 1831, and the last April 12, 1865. Taken together, these manuscripts not only constitute one of the great sources of information about Lincoln but also document in a most human manner the attitudes, opinions, problems, and activities of Americans living in one of the dramatic and significant periods of American history.

The March [11], 1831, document (acquired in 1897) is a petition to the Sangamon County Commissioners' Court for appointment of a constable; twenty-nine names appear on the petition, with Lincoln signing not only for himself but also for John Hanks and John D. Johnston. Another early document, acquired by the Library in 1959, was written entirely in Lincoln's hand on July 24, 1832, only a week after Lincoln had returned home from the Black Hawk War. It will be remembered that he commanded a company of volunteers in that war, and this document is a certificate of the service in his company of one Nathan Drake. It reads:

I do hereby certify that Nathan Drake volunteered and served as a private in the Company which I commanded in the regiment commanded by Col. Colonel Samuel M. Thompson of the Brigade commanded by Brigadier General Samuel Whiteside in an expedition directed against the Sac & Fox Indians and that he was discharged on the 29th day of April & discharged on the 8th day of June 1832 - having served forty and two thirds days - given under my hand this 24th July 1832 -

A Lincoln. Captain

Four other "Lincoln discharges" are known to exist, but they are printed forms filled in by Lincoln. No information is available about Drake, but on the back of the document is the following note, in the handwriting of John Taylor:

"For value received I assign all the benefit of the within discharges to John Taylor and hereby authorize the paymaster to pay over to John Taylor all the wages I may be entitled to receive for my services.

Attest M. Mobley.

Nathan Drake."

Taylor is known as a one-time sheriff of Sangamon County and one of the promoters of Petersburg and Taylorville; Mordecai Mobley, who attested the endorsement, was a tavern-keeper in Springfield. Sixty-seven men served in Lincoln's company, and presumably other "discharges" exist, although only the five have turned up in the intervening 130 years.

One of the earliest surviving letters written by Lincoln was acquired by the Library in 1952 and is addressed to George C. Spears, a well-known resident of Clary's Grove and New Salem. At the time Lincoln wrote this letter he was postmaster at New Salem, having been appointed to that position on May 7, 1833. He continued to serve as postmaster until the office was discontinued on May 10, 1836.

Other manuscripts from the New Salem years of Lincoln's life are the four original surveys drawn by him, one in 1834 and the other three in 1836. Illustrated on page 2 is the survey of May 21, 1836, of the town of Huron, Illinois.

Perhaps the most intimate letters Lincoln ever penned are a remarkable series he wrote to his very close friend Joshua Fry Speed. It was Speed with whom Lincoln first roomed when he moved from New Salem to Springfield, and their friendship continued until Lincoln's death. Speed—at the time these letters

Mr Spears

At your request I send you a receipt for the postage on your paper. I am some what surprised at your request. I will however comply with it. The law requires newspaper postage to be paid in advance and now that I have waited a full year you choose to wound my feelings by saying that unless you get a receipt I will probably make you pay it again.

Respectfully
A Lincoln

Received of George Spears in full for postage on the Sangamo Journal up to the first of July 1834

A Lincoln P.M.

One of the earliest surviving letters was written by Lincoln as postmaster at New Salem and addressed to George C. Spears.

were written—had moved to Kentucky to marry Miss Fanny Henning, and apparently had doubts, as so many men do, of the wisdom of his decision and the depth of his affection. Lincoln, too, was disturbed about the problems involved in deciding about proposing marriage, and he poured out to his friend his doubts, as Speed in turn was to discuss his pending marriage, and after the marriage (February 15, 1842), the joys of wedded bliss. Lincoln's letter to Speed, dated February 3, 1842, is representative of the series, and was acquired by the Library in 1952 with funds donated by citizens of Illinois for the purchase of material from the Oliver R. Barrett collection. "Hypo" in the letter means hypochondria, "Sarah" is Sarah Rickard, "Billy Herndon" was an uncle of William H. Herndon, later Lincoln's law partner, and Lincoln delivered a eulogy on Benjamin Ferguson on February 8, just five days after this letter was written:

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

To any Minister of the Gospel, or other authorised Person---GREETING.

THESE are to License and permit you to join in the holy bands of Matrimony *Abraham Lincoln* and *Mary Todd* of the County of Sangamon and State of Illinois, and for so doing, this shall be your sufficient warrant.

Given under my hand and seal of office, at Springfield, in said County this *4th* day of *April* 1842

Clerk.

Testified on the same 4th day of Apr. 1842
Charles Dupon

The marriage license of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd.

"Dear Speed:

Springfield, Ills. Feby. 3- 1842—

Your letter of the 25th. Jany. came to hand to-day. You well know that I do not feel my own sorrows much more keenly than I do yours, when I know of them; and yet I assure you I was not much hurt by what you wrote me of your excessively bad feeling at the time you wrote. Not that I am less capable of sympathising with you now than ever; not that I am less your friend than ever, but because I hope and believe, that your present anxiety and distress about her health and her life, must and will forever banish those horrid doubts, which I know you sometimes felt, as to the truth of your affection for her. If they can be once and forever removed, (and I almost feel a presentiment that the Almighty has sent your present affliction expressly for that object) surely, nothing can come in their stead, to fill their immeasurable measure of misery. The death scenes of those we love, are surely painful enough; but these we are prepared to, and expect to see. They happen to all, and all know they must happen. Painful as they are, they are not an unlooked-for-sorrow. Should she, as you fear, be destined to an early grave, it is indeed, a great consolation to know that she is so well pre-

pared to meet it. Her religion, which you once disliked so much, I will venture you now prize most highly.

But I hope your melancholly bodings as to her early death, are not well founded. I even hope, that ere this reaches you, she will have returned with improved and still improving health; and that you will have met her, and forgotten the sorrows of the past, in the enjoyment of the present.

I would say more if I could; but it seems I have said enough. It really appears to me that you yourself ought to rejoice, and not sorrow, at this indubitable evidence of your undying affection for her. Why Speed, if you did not love her, although you might not wish her death, you would most calmly be resigned to it. Perhaps this point is no longer a question with you, and my pertinacious dwelling upon it, is a rude intrusion upon your feelings. If so, you must pardon me. You know the Hell I have suffered on that point, and how tender I am upon it. You know I do not mean wrong.

I have been quite clear of hypo since you left,—even better than I was along in the fall.

I have seen Sarah but once. She seemed very cheerful, and so, I said nothing to her about what we spoke of.

Old uncle Billy Herndon is dead, and it is said this evening that uncle Ben Ferguson will not live. This I believe is all the news, and enough at that unless it were better.

Write me immediately on the receipt of this. Your friend, as ever
Lincoln”

Lincoln did conquer his doubts and married Mary Todd on November 4, 1842; the original marriage license, acquired by the Library in 1897, is reproduced on the preceding page.

Several of the few surviving letters from Lincoln to his wife are in the Library, including this one dated June 12, 1848. It was acquired by the Library in 1940; “H. R.” in the letter means the House of Representatives (Lincoln was serving his one term as an Illinois congressman at the time); and “our dear Bobby” is Robert Todd Lincoln, then almost five years old:

“My dear wife:

Washington, June 12. 1848—

On my return from Philadelphia, yesterday, where, in my anxiety I had been led to attend the whig convention I found your last letter. I was so tired and sleepy, having ridden all night, that I could not answer it till to-day; and now I have to do so in the H.R. The leading matter in your letter, is your wish to return to this side of the Mountains. Will you be a good girl in all things, if I consent? Then come along, and that as soon as possible. Having got the idea in my head, I shall be impatient till I see you. You will not have money enough to bring you; but I presume your uncle will supply you, and I will refund him here. By the way you do not mention whether you have received the fifty dollars I sent you. I do not much fear but that you got it; because the want of it would have induced you [to?] say something in relation to it. If your uncle is already at Lexington, you might induce him to start on earlier than the first of July; he could stay in Kentucky longer on his return, and so make up for lost time. Since I began this letter, the H.R. has passed a resolution for adjourning on the 17th. July, which probably will pass the Senate. I hope this letter will not be disagreeable to you; which, together with the circumstances under which I write, I hope will excuse

me for not writing a longer one. Come on just as soon as you can. I want to see you, and our dear—dear boys very much. Every body here wants to see our dear Bobby. Affectionately
A. Lincoln"

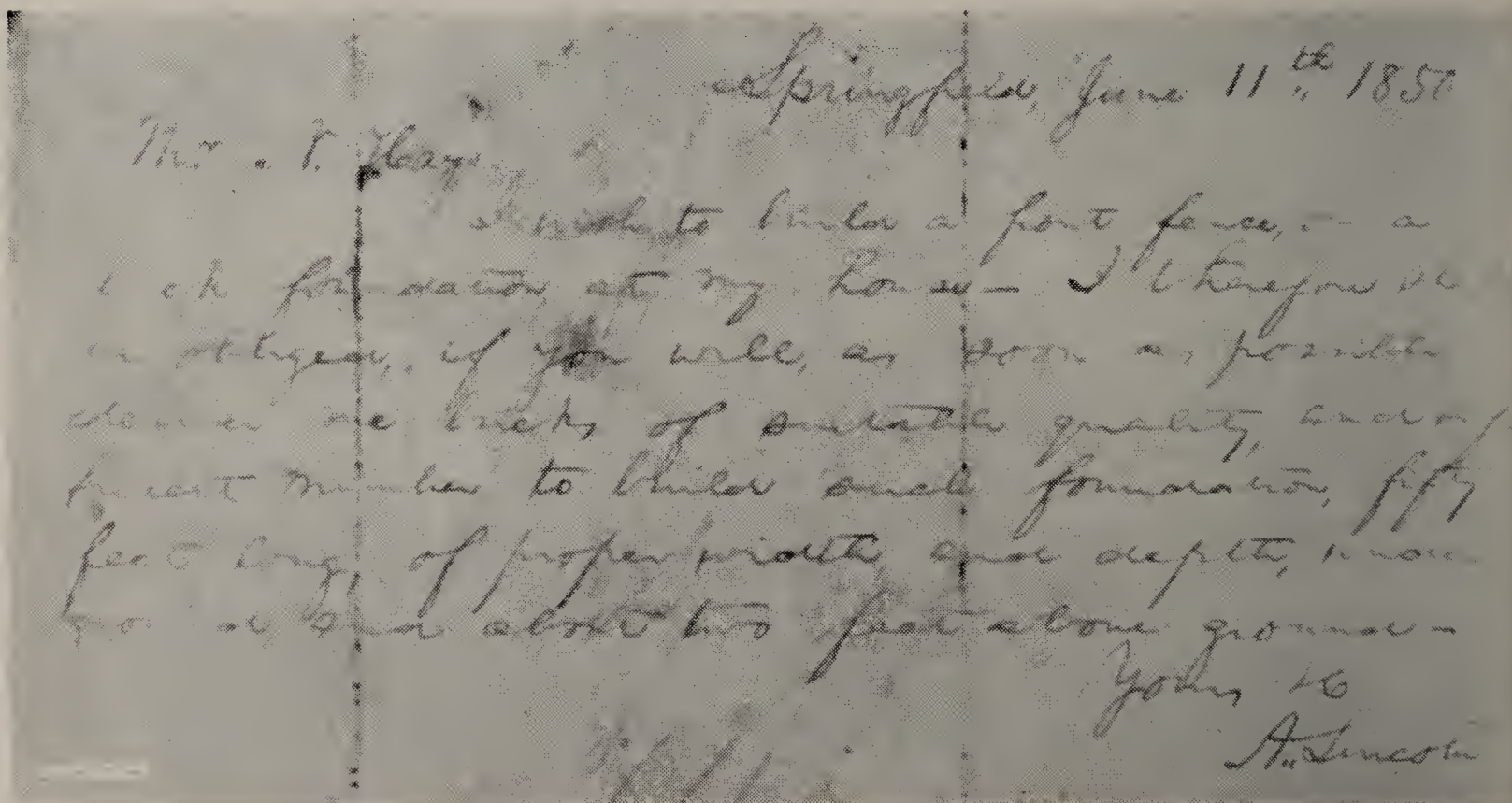
Lincoln was a careful and successful lawyer, and his law partner in 1848 was William H. Herndon. Lincoln kept in touch with Herndon while he was a congressman in Washington, and on July 10, 1848, wrote him a long and serious letter, saying in part, "There may sometimes be ungenerous attempts to keep a young man down; and they will succeed too, if he allows his mind to be diverted from its true channel to brood over the attempted injury. . . . You can not fail in any laudable object, unless you allow your mind to be improperly directed." But on the next day, Lincoln wrote again to Herndon in an entirely different vein:

"Dear William: Washington, July 11-1848

Yours of the 3rd. is this moment received; and I hardly need say, it gives unalloyed pleasure. I now almost regret writing the serious, long faced letter, I wrote yesterday; but let the past as nothing be. Go it while you're young!

I write this in the confusion of the H. R, and with several other things to attend to. I will send you about eight different speeches this evening; and as to kissing a pretty girl, [I] know one very pretty one, but I guess she wont let me kiss her. Yours forever
A. Lincoln"

After returning to Springfield, Lincoln fixed up his house in the summer of 1850, and the letter he wrote to Nathaniel Hay, Springfield brickmaker and lumber dealer, was acquired by the Library in 1954. The brick foundation for the fence is familiar to everyone who has visited the Lincoln home in Springfield:



Springfield, June 11th 1850
Mr. N. Hay,
I wish to build a post fence, - a
brick foundation at my house - I therefore
am obliged, if you will, as soon as possible
send me one truck of suitable quality and
price to build such foundation, fifty
feet long, of proper width and depth, and
to be about two feet above ground -
Yours to
A. Lincoln

Perhaps the harshest letter Lincoln ever wrote was to John D. Johnston on November 4, 1851; the Library acquired the letter in 1957 as a gift from Mrs. Foreman M. Lebold of Chicago. Johnston was Lincoln's half-brother; the Chapman mentioned in the letter had married Lincoln's stepmother's granddaughter. Curiously enough, the note appended to this letter is the only surviving communication between Lincoln and his stepmother.



The Lincoln Home as it appeared in the summer of 1860. Lincoln and two of his boys are in the yard; a neighbor's son stands on the sidewalk.

"Dear Brother:

Shelbyville, Novr. 4. 1851

When I came into Charleston day-before yesterday I learned that you are anxious to sell the land where you live, and move to Missouri. I have been thinking of this ever since; and can not but think such a notion is utterly foolish. What can you do in Missouri, better than here? Is the land any richer? Can you there, any more than here, raise corn, & wheat & oats, without work? Will any body there, any more than here, do your work for you? If you intend to go to work, there is no better place than right where you are; if you do not intend to go to work, you can not get along any where. Squirming & crawling about from place to place can do no good. You have raised no crop this year, and what you really want is to sell the land, get the money and spend it—part with the land you have, and my life upon it, you will never after, own a spot big enough to bury you in. Half you will get for the land, you spend in moving to Missouri, and the other half you will eat and drink, and wear out, & no foot of land will be bought. Now I feel it is my duty to have no hand in such a piece of foolery. I feel that it is so even on your own account; and particularly on Mother's account. The Eastern forty acres I intend to keep for Mother while she lives—if you will not cultivate it; it will rent for enough to support her—at least it will rent for something. Her Dower in the other two forties, she can let you have, and no thanks to [me].

Now do not misunderstand this letter. I do not write it in any un-

Shelbyville Nov: 4. 1857

Dear Brother.

When I came into Charleston day before yesterday I learned that you are anxious to see the land where you live and move to Missouri. I have been thinking of this ever since and can not but think you are a little foolish. What can you do in Missouri better than here? Is the land any richer? Can you there any more than here raise corn & wheat & oats without work? Will any body there any more than here do your work for you? If you intend to go to work there is no better place than right where you are; if you do not intend to go to work you can not get along any better. Sincerely,

The beginning of the letter in which Lincoln reprimanded his step-brother, John D. Johnston, and sent a note of advice to his stepmother.

kindness. I write it in order, if possible, to get you to face the truth—which truth is, you are destitute because you have idled away all your time. Your thousand pretences for not getting along better, are all nonsense—they deceive no body but yourself. Go to work is the only cure for your case.

A word for Mother:

Chapman tells me he wants you to go and live with him. If I were you I would try it awhile. If you get tired of it (as I think you will not) you can return to your own home. Chapman feels very kindly to you; and I have no doubt he will make your situation very pleasant. Sincerely your Son A. Lincoln"

Lincoln's campaign against Stephen A. Douglas for the Senate in 1858 is well known; perhaps less well known was his effort to be elected to that body in 1854. In that year he was elected to the Illinois General Assembly but refused to accept his seat in order to be eligible for election as U. S. senator. He received more votes on the first ballot than any of the other candidates but was still short of a majority. Finally, Lincoln threw his support to Lyman Trumbull in order to frustrate the election of the Democratic hopeful Joel A. Matteson, and Trumbull was elected on the tenth ballot. Lincoln's letter of resignation from the legislature was acquired by the Library in 1937.

Lincoln's views on what a man should do to become a lawyer are well expressed in his letter to William H. Grigsby of August 3, 1858. Grigsby is assumed to be related to the family of the same name Lincoln knew in Indiana. The letter (on the next page) was a gift to the Library from the Oglesby estate of Springfield.

"Wm. H. Grigsby, Esq.
My dear Sir:

Springfield,
Aug: 3. 1858

Yours of the 14th. of July, desiring a situation in my law office, was received several days ago. My partner, Mr. Herndon, controls our office in this respect, and I have known of his declining at least a dozen applications like yours within the last three months.

If you wish to be a lawyer, attach no consequence to the place you are in, or the person you are with; but get books, sit down anywhere and go to reading for yourself. That will make a lawyer of you quicker than any other way.

Yours Respectfully,
A. Lincoln."

A dramatic document entirely in Lincoln's hand is dated September 15, 1858, and constitutes at least part of his notes for the Lincoln-Douglas debate held in Jonesboro on that day. It includes the famous question he first proposed to Douglas in their Freeport debate, the so-called "Freeport Question," long considered by some historians to have been a major factor in Douglas's defeat by Lincoln for the Presidency two years later, in 1860.

Several months later Lincoln had not yet determined his ultimate political ambition when he wrote to the editor of the *Rock Island Register*, Thomas J. Pickett, on April 16, 1859, saying that he did not consider himself "fit" for the Presidency. This letter was acquired by the Library in 1952 from the Barrett fund:

"T. J. Pickett, Esq
My dear Sir.

Springfield,
April 16, 1859.

Yours of the 13th. is just received. My engagements are such that I can not, at any very early day, visit Rock-Island, to deliver a lecture,

Springfield, Nov^r 25-1854

N. W. Matheny,

Clerk of the County Court

of Sangamon County, Illinois

Sir,

I hereby decline to accept the office of Representative in the General Assembly, for the said county of Sangamon, to which office I am reported to have been elected on the 9th of Nov^r last. I therefore desire that you notify the Governor of this vacancy, in order that legal steps be taken to fill the same.

Yours Obed^t Serv^t

A. Lincoln

Lincoln's letter declining to accept the Assembly seat to which he had been elected.

Springfield, April 25 1859.

J. F. Pickett, Esq.

My dear Sir:

Yours of the 13th is just received. My engagements were such that I can not, at any very early day, visit Rock Island, to deliver a lecture, or for any other object.

As to the other matter you kindly mention, I must, in candor, say I do not think myself fit for the Presidency. I certainly am flattered and gratified that some partial friends think of me in that connection; but I really think it best for our cause that no concerted effort, such as you suggest, should be made.

Let this be considered confidential.

Yours very truly
A. Lincoln

or for any other object.

As to the other matter you kindly mention, I must, in candor, say I do not think myself fit for the Presidency. I certainly am flattered, and gratified, that some partial friends think of me in that connection: but I really think it best for our cause that no concerted effort, such as you suggest, should be made.

Let this be considered confidential. Yours very truly

A. Lincoln—"

The previous letter notwithstanding, Lincoln did actively seek and win the Presidency. Two days after his election he wrote this confidential letter, acquired by the Library in 1949, to the Vice-President-elect, Hannibal Hamlin. Hamlin met Lincoln in Chicago on November 21-26 to discuss formation of the cabinet.

"Confidential

Hon. H. Hamlin.

Springfield, Ills. Nov. 8, 1860

My dear Sir. I am anxious for a personal interview with you at as early a day as possible. Can you, without much inconvenience, meet me at Chicago? If you can, please name as early a day as you conveniently can, and telegraph me; unless there be a sufficient time, before the day named, to communicate by mail. Yours very truly

A. Lincoln."

As he prepared to leave Springfield for Washington, D.C., Lincoln wrote out a receipt for Robert Irwin, president of the Springfield Marine and Fire Insurance Company, to sign for notes owned by Lincoln that Irwin was to collect. This document, entirely in Lincoln's hand except for Irwin's signature, gives a clear picture of the President-elect's financial condition on or about February 9,

1861. The document was presented to the Library by the Springfield Marine Bank in 1954:

"Abraham Lincoln leaves with the under-signed for safekeeping, and to receive interest, the following papers—

One note of A. J. Van Deren, J. M. Vanderen, Cyrus W. Van Deren, security, and Lewis Johnson, for one thousand dollars, balance due, interest at ten per cent, paid up to March 18— 1861.

Two notes of N. W. Edwards, together amounting to fifteen hundred and eighty seven dollars and ninety cents, interest at ten per cent due from Jan. 16. 1860.

Two notes of Smith, Edwards & Co, for aggregate ballance of one thousand dollars, and interest at ten per cent from Jan. 16. 1861.

One note of J. K. Lewis and Thomas Lewis, for one hundred and fifty dollars, interest at ten per cent due from April 22, 1860.

One note, and mortgage of Isaac Lindsay, for six hundred dollars, interest at [te]n per cent, due from August 28. 1860.

One note & mortgage, of William Cline, for Seven hundred and fifty dollars, interest at ten per cent from Nov. 22. 1859.

One note & mortgage of J. Ruckel, for five hundred dollars, interest at ten per cent, due from Sep 28— 1860.

One note of John Cook, for seven hundred and fifty dollars, interest due, from April 17, 1860.

One Springfield City bond, for one thousand dollars reduced by two payments to \$666.67.

One Certificate of Six shares of Alton & Sangamon Railroad stock

One certificate of Scholarship in Illinois State University.

One note of N. B. Judd, for three thousand dollars, with interest at ten per cent from Sep 1. 1859.

Policy of Insurance

Lease of house

Notes on Haines,

Rob. Irwin"

Lincoln wrote to the same Robert Irwin on March 20, 1861, about an appointment for George Denison of New York that Irwin had been urging. All but overwhelmed by the hordes of office-seekers who pestered him without mercy, Lincoln signs himself "Your tired friend." The letter was acquired by the Library in 1940.

"Private

Robert Irwin, Esq

My dear Sir:

Washington D. C.

March 20. 1861

I am scared about your friend Dennison. The place is so fiercely sought by, and for, others, while, except what has come through you, his name is not mentioned at all, that I fear appointing him will appear too arbitrary on my part. I have made no appointments at the city as yet; but it has pained me that among the scores of names urged, his has not occurred once. Your tired friend

A. Lincoln"

On the next page is a reproduction of this letter.

As President, Lincoln was responsible not only for the operation of the executive branch of the government but, as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, for the prosecution of the war. In 1861, Lincoln was determined not to alienate the border states. He believed that if those states, with the full support of their citizens, joined the Confederacy, it would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for the Union forces to obtain a decisive military victory. Many of the prob-

Private.

Washington D.C.

March 20. 1861

Robert Surin, Esq

My dear Sir:

I am scared about
your friend Dennison— The place
is so fiercely sought by, and for,
others, while, except what has
come through you, his name is
not mentioned at all, that I
fear appointing him will ap-
pear too arbitrary on my part.

I have made no appointments
in the City as yet; but, ^{it} has
seemed so that among the
score of names urged, his has
not occurred once—

Your tired friend
A. Lincoln

lems that arose in implementing this policy, as well as others, were caused by the ill-timed political activities of Union generals. In the summer of 1861 General John C. Fremont, who had been the Republican presidential candidate in 1856, was in command of Union forces in the West. Inept at administration, at best a mediocre tactician, Fremont issued an emancipation proclamation of his own on August 30, 1861. Lincoln was acutely embarrassed by this premature act because of the violent reaction against the government it caused in the border states, particularly in Kentucky; but dismissing Fremont and repudiating the proclamation would have been difficult since Fremont was the "darling" of a number of politically strong congressmen. Lincoln nevertheless determined to dismiss Fremont, and sent this letter of October 24, 1861, to General Samuel R. Curtis in St. Louis. The two enclosures were to Fremont (the orders for his relief) and General David Hunter, ordering him to succeed Fremont as commander in the West (the letter to Hunter may have been held until October 28). This significant letter was acquired by the Library in 1944.

Brig: Genl. S. R. Curtis

"Executive Mansion,
Washington, Oct. 24, 1861.

Dear Sir On receipt of this, with the accompanying inclosures, you will take safe, certain, and suitable measures to have the inclosure addressed to Major General Fremont, delivered to him, with all reasonable despatch—subject to these conditions only, that if, when Gen. Fremont shall be reached by the messenger (yourself, or any one sent by you) he shall then have, in personal command, fought and won a battle, or shall then be actually in a battle, or shall then be in the im-

Executive Mansion

Washington, March 14, 1862.

President's War
Orders, No. 3

Major General McClellan having personally taken the field at the head of the Army of the Potomac, until otherwise ordered, he is relieved from the command of the other military departments, he retaining command of the Department of the Potomac—

Ordered further that the ~~three~~ ^{two} departments now under the respective commands

together with so much of that of General Buell as, by virtue of a note and order of the President, dated March 14, 1862, is assigned to the command of General Halleck, and Hunter, be consolidated, and designated the Department of the

mediate presence of the enemy, in expectation of a battle, it is not to be delivered, but held for further orders. After, and not till after, the delivery to Gen. Fremont, let the inclosure addressed to Gen. Hunter be delivered to him. Your Obt. Servt.
A. Lincoln"

Lincoln also had a problem in General George B. McClellan, commander-in-chief and leader of the Army of the Potomac in the East. Because of natural temperament and an exaggerated idea of his own importance, and because he greatly overestimated the number of Confederate soldiers opposing him, McClellan was extremely cautious—as Lincoln said, he had the "slows." On March 8, 1862, Lincoln ordered McClellan to organize the Army of the Potomac into four corps, and also to provide for enough troops to guard Washington, D.C., and "leave said City entirely secure"; on January 27 he had ordered McClellan to advance by February 22. Finally, because of McClellan's continued inactivity, Lincoln relieved him as commander-in-chief on March 11 but allowed him to remain as commander of the Army of the Potomac (only the signature in this document, acquired by the Library in 1941, is Lincoln's):

"President's War }
 Order, No. 3 }

*Executive Mansion
 Washington, March 11, 1862.*

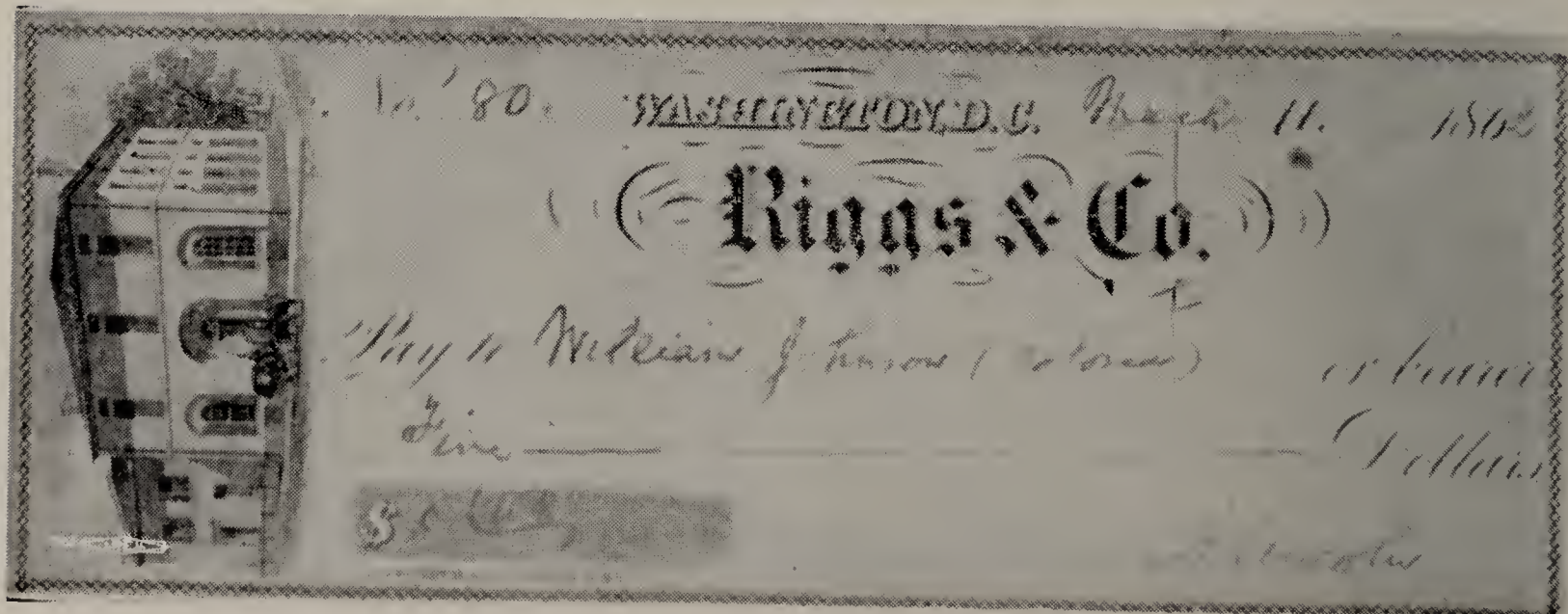
Major General McClellan having personally taken the field at the head of the Army of the Potomac, until otherwise ordered, he is relieved from the command of the other Military departments, he retaining command of the Department of the Potomac.

Ordered further that the two departments, now under the respective commands of Generals Halleck, and Hunter together with so much of that under General Buell as lies West of a North and South line indefinitely drawn through Knoxville, Tennessee, be consolidated, and designated the Department of the Mississippi; and that, until otherwise ordered, Major General Halleck have command of said department.

Ordered also, that the country West of the Department of the Potomac, and East of the Department of the Mississippi be a Military department to be called the Mountain Department; and that the same be commanded by Major General Fremont.

That all the commanders of departments, after the receipt of this order by them respectively, report severally and directly to the Secretary of War, and that prompt, full, and frequent reports will be expected of all and each of them.
Abraham Lincoln"

Lincoln's check paying \$5.00 to "William Johnson (colored)"



Capt Dahlgren may
let "Doc" Brown get
the gun that he can
not hurt himself
with.
Oct 14, 1862. A. Lincoln

In contrast to this serious matter of military leadership, Lincoln on the same day issued a check to "William Johnson, colored." Johnson was surely the same man for whom Lincoln wrote this note on March 7, 1861:

"Whom it may concern.

William Johnson, a colored boy, and bearer of this, has been with me about twelve months; and has been, so far, as I believe, honest, faithful, sober, industrious, and handy as a servant."

Lincoln later tried (with no success) to get a job for Johnson in the Navy Department, and then successfully placed him in the Treasury Department. Johnson worked for Lincoln as a part-time valet, and had come with him to Washington from Illinois.

Even after McClellan's command was reduced, Lincoln continued to have problems with the General, particularly since McClellan always wanted more troops to fight the wholly imaginary large number of troops at his front. In a letter acquired by the Library in 1939, Lincoln queries McClellan about the number of troops in his army:

*"Major General McClellan
My Dear Sir—*

*Executive Mansion,
Washington, July 13 1862.*

I am told that over 160,000 men have gone into your Army on the Peninsula. When I was with you the other day we made out 86,500 remaining, leaving 73,500 to be accounted for. I believe 23,500, will cover all the killed, wounded and missing in all your battles and skirmishes, leaving 50,000 who have left otherwise. Not more than 5000 of these have died, leaving 45,000 of your Army still alive, and not with it. I believe half, or two thirds of them are fit for duty to-day. Have you any more perfect knowledge of this than I have? If I am right, and you had these men with you, you could go into Richmond in the next three days. How can they be got to you? and how can they be prevented from getting away in such numbers for the future? A. Lincoln"

In spite of his preoccupation with military affairs, Lincoln found time for children. He was a fond parent, and in October, 1862, wrote this note to Captain John A. Dahlgren. The Library acquired the note and the gun in 1941:

"Capt. Dahlgren may let 'Tad' have a little gun that he can not hurt himself with.

Oct. 14, 1862.

A. Lincoln"

Once again—and in a mood perhaps best described as out-of-patience — Lincoln chided McClellan for inaction. In a telegram of October 25 (misdated by Lincoln the 24th), 1862 (acquired by the Library in 1939), Lincoln replied to a dispatch McClellan had forwarded from the commander of a cavalry unit who declared his horses were not able to leave camp because they suffered from these ailments: ". . . sore-tongue, grease, and consequent lameness, and sore backs . . . absolutely broken down from fatigue."

Washington City, D.C.
Oct. 24. 1862
Majr. Genl. McClellan
I have just read your despatch about sore tongued and fatigued horses—
Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigue anything?
A. Lincoln

Washington City, D. C.

"Majr. Genl. McClellan

Oct. 24. 1862

I have just read your despatch about sore tongued and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigue anything?

A. Lincoln"

Finally, Lincoln relieved McClellan of command. The order to General Halleck giving details of the change was acquired by the Library in 1939:

"Executive Mansion, Washington, [November 5, 1862].

'By direction of the President, it is ordered that Major General McClellan be relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac; and that Major General Burnside take the command of that Army.

Also, that Major General Hunter take command of the Corps in said Army, which is now commanded by General Burnside.

That Major General Fitz-John Porter be relieved from the command of the corps he now commands in said Army; and that Major General Hooker take command of said corps.'

The General-in-Chief, is authorized, in discretion, to issue an order substantially as the above, forthwith, or so soon as he may deem proper.

A. Lincoln"

Meanwhile, another major problem had also been occupying the President's attention, and on September 22, 1862, he issued his preliminary Proclamation of Emancipation, to take effect on January 1, 1863. On January 14, 1863, Lincoln wrote General John A. Dix about the proclamation and the use of Negro troops to garrison fortifications. The letter was acquired in 1940.

Private & Confidential

Executive Mansion,

Washington, January 14, 1863.

Major General Dix.

My dear Sir:

The proclamation has been issued. We were not succeeding—at best were progressing too slowly—without it. Now, that we have it, and bear all the disadvantage of it, (as we do bear some in certain quarters) we must also take some benefit from it, if practicable. I therefore will thank you for your well considered opinion whether Fortress-Monroe, and York-Town, one or both, could not, in whole or in part, be garrisoned by colored troops, leaving the white forces now necessary, at those places, to be employed elsewhere.

Yours very truly

A. Lincoln

"Private & confidential
Major General Dix
My dear Sir:

Executive Mansion,
Washington, January 14, 1863.

The proclamation has been issued. We were not succeeding—at best, were progressing too slowly—without it. Now, that we have it, and bear all the disadvantage of it, (as we do bear some in certain quarters) we must also take some benefit from it, if practicable. I therefore will thank you for your well considered opinion whether Fortress-Monroe, and York-Town, one or both, could not, in whole or in part, be garrisoned by colored troops, leaving the white forces now necessary at those places, to be employed elsewhere. Yours very truly

A. Lincoln"

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives, that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here, have, thus far, so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before

us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

After refusing General Burnside's resignation of January 8, 1863 (this letter is in the Library), Lincoln appointed General Joseph Hooker to command on January 26, handing him at the time his famous letter concerning ambition and dictatorship. Some five months later, as Lee started north in a movement that would culminate in the Battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln sent this advice to General Hooker (in a letter acquired in 1939):

Major General Hooker

“Washington, D. C.,

June 5. 1863

Yours of to-day was received an hour ago. So much of professional military skill is requisite to answer it, that I have turned the task over to Gen. Halleck. He promises to perform it with his utmost care. I have but one idea which I think worth suggesting to you, and that is in case you find Lee coming to the North of the Rappahannock, I would by no means cross to the South of it. If he should leave a rear force at Fredericksburg, tempting you to fall upon it, it would fight in intrenchments, and have you at disadvantage, and so, man for man, worst you at that point, while his main force would in some way be getting an advantage of you Northward. In one word, I would not take any risk of being entangled upon the river, like an ox jumped half over a fence, and liable to be torn by dogs, front and rear, without a fair chance to gore one way or kick the other. If Lee would come to my side of the river, I would keep on the same side & fight him, or act on the defence, according as might be my estimate of his strength relatively to my own. But these are mere suggestions which I desire to be controlled by the judgment of yourself and Gen. Halleck.

A. Lincoln”

Certainly the manuscript in the Library which attracts the most attention is the Gettysburg Address. There are five surviving manuscripts of Lincoln's November 19, 1863, speech, and the one in the Library is the so-called Edward Everett copy. The manuscript was sent by Lincoln to Edward Everett on February 4, 1864, to be sold at the Sanitary Fair in New York; it was acquired by the Library in 1944 with funds contributed by Illinois schoolchildren with the assistance of Marshall Field.

Near the war's end, when Union troops had retaken Fort Sumter, Lincoln wrote to his Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, about the ceremony of raising the flag again over the fort. It is interesting to note that Lincoln was wrong about the day on which Fort Sumter (not—as Lincoln spells it—*Sumpter*) had fallen to Confederate forces. The fort had been evacuated at about noon on April 14, 1861, by Major Robert Anderson; the flag-raising ceremonies at the fort in 1865 took place on April 14, only a few hours before Lincoln's assassination. Among those present was Robert Anderson, then a general officer.

The preceding letters and documents are illustrative of the 1,247 manuscripts in Lincoln's hand in the Library. There is another group of short notes in the Library that illustrate the way Lincoln handled much of his heavy presidential mail. Very often he turned the letter over and, after directing it to the proper government official or department, added a short comment about the action to be taken. These short notes are called “endorsements,” and the following examples from the collection in the Library are believed to be previously unpublished. These letters reveal the kinds of pressure brought upon the President by individuals of prominence who were seeking favors. As such, they are of substantial interest because they show how Lincoln handled this problem. First we print the letter to Lincoln, then his endorsement, and finally any explanatory material deemed necessary.

General Head Quarters — State of Illinois.

Adjutant General's Office.

Springfield, July 9th 1861.

We the undersigned would respectfully recommend Mr H C Myers for the appointment as sutler of the Cavalry regiment raised in this State Mr Myers is a gentleman of high moral character thorough business habits and well qualified to fill the position He was among the first to come out in favor of sustaining the government and may be relied upon as one of best supporters His appointment would meet the wishes of the friends of the regiment who know him well and give general satisfaction to the troops.

Thomas S Mather

O. M. Hatch

Sec State

Adjutant General

Illinois ---

John Williams

Commissary Genl

J Wm Moose

John A. McClernand

Quartermaster General

Washington City, July 19/61

*His Excellency, A. Lincoln,
Pres. U.S.*

Sir — Allow me, respectfully, to urge the appointment of Mr Myers, who is known to you to a sutlers or some place connected with the army. Mr M. is a worthy man and his appointment would not only much oblige him but me.

Your ob't servt.

John A. McClernand

P S. Mr M. would prefer an official connection with the Illinois troops.

M C -----

[Endorsed on the back by Lincoln:] Mr. Myers is a personal acquaintance of mine, an honest man, of good business habits; and I desire that his application be respectfully considered.

A. L.

July 22, 1861

Note: Henry C. Myers was born December 6, 1817, in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and came to Springfield, Illinois, in 1838. He was first a grocer, then in the confectionery business, and from 1861 to 1865 was sutler at Camp Butler. After the close of the war he engaged in general merchandising. He died January 24, 1871.

Springfield, Illinois

August 7th 1861

Hon Abraham Lincoln

President of the United States.

Sir,

I respectfully request to be appointed Assistant Adjutant General of Illinois Volunteers, to be attached to the staff of Brigadier General Grant.

I remain Sir—

Very Respectfully

Your obdt Servt

John Belser

[Endorsed on the back by Lincoln:] I believe the appointment of John Belser, to be Assistant Adjutant General, to Gen. Grant is proper; but, to be sure, send the appointment to Gen. Grant, to be delivered or not, in his discretion.

A. Lincoln

August 13, 1861.

Note: Apparently Grant did not need Belser, for he was not appointed. Grant's assistant adjutant general was John A. Rawlins.

Louisville 22 Aug 1861

Hon A Lincoln Pres US

I beg to introduce Mr. J. B. Alexander who visits Washington with the hope of getting a Lieutenancy in the Army—he is the son of Col E. B Alexander of the 10th infantry & now at Fort Laramie — I have no doubt that Mr Alexander would fill well his place — he is capable & a young man of education & industrious habits —

I hope he will be gratified — he is a loyal man and would be a valuable acquisition to the service in the sphere to which he aspires

Your friend

J. F. Speed

[Endorsed on the back by Lincoln:] *Let this request of my friend J. F. Speed be granted, if it is consistently possible.*

A. Lincoln

Sep. 4, 1861

Note: Apparently it was not “consistently possible”; surviving records do not indicate that Alexander was ever appointed.

Warren County, Illinois,
August 9, 1862

Hon. A. Lincoln

Sir.

The bearer of this letter Mr O J Flagg, a member of the Knox County Bar, desires if possible, to procure the appointment of Paymaster in the army. My personal acquaintance with Mr Flagg is but slight but he is so highly endorsed by gentlemen worthy of all confidence that I have no hesitation in recommending him as amply qualified for the appointment, and worthy of it.

Very Respectfully

Your Obt. Sevt.

C. B. Lawrence

[Endorsed on the back by Lincoln:] *The within an ample recommendation, and if an Assistant Paymaster, or a Commissary of Subsistence, is needed to serve in the War, let Mr Flagg be appointed.*

Sep. 9, 1862

A. Lincoln

Note: Flagg was appointed captain and commissary of subsistence on November 26, 1862.

Head Qrs 1st Brig. 1st Div 14
Chattanooga, Tenn, Feby 12th 1864

To His Excellency, Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States.

I respectfully recommend George M. McConnell of Jacksonville, Illinois, as a person well qualified for the office of Paymaster in the U. S. Army. Mr. McConnell is thoroughly patriotic, and has used all his influence as a citizen in favor of prosecuting the war against the rebels. The peculiar condition of his private affairs has prevented him from entering the line of the Army heretofore. I am confident that he will make an upright and capable disbursing officer.

*I have the honor to be
very respectfully*

Your obdt sevt

Wm. P. Carlin

Brig Genl

Head Quarters 14th Army Corps
Chattanooga Feb 11th 1864

I concur in this recommendation within I am personally acquainted with Mr McConnell and am well satisfied of his competence for the position of Paymaster

John M Palmer
Maj Genl

[Endorsed on the back by Lincoln:] I shall be really glad if the within named George M. McConnell can be appointed an Additional Pay Master-- Besides personally knowing the family, the within recommendations of Gen's Palmer & Carlin are ample; and if his services can be made useful let him be appointed

A. Lincoln

March 23, 1864

Note: Carlin and Palmer together made a strong request, and McConnell was appointed major and additional paymaster on April 20, 1864.

The Lincoln manuscripts mentioned here represent only a sampling of the total in the Illinois State Historical Library. Numerous other manuscript collections in the Library contain letters referring to Lincoln — these are eyewitness accounts and so constitute an important source of basic information. Closely associated with this group are more than sixty diaries of Civil War soldiers or collections of their letters.

In connection with these mountains of manuscript material on Lincoln and his period in history it is worth remembering that the Library is indebted to hundreds of people who, over the years, have either presented valuable family and business papers to the Library or have contributed funds to be used for the purchase of manuscripts. Even though the Library has a small field services staff which searches the state for historical material, the help of private citizens is essential if the Library is to continue its program of preserving Illinois history.

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The Illinois State Historical Library

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